Digging of wells in the state

1223. SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ten States are selected for digging wells in a massive way for providing drinking water and water for irrigation as a cent per cent Centrally sponsored scheme;

(b) whether the Kerala State Government has demanded for the inclusion of the State in this project; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and decision of the Centre thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) A scheme for construction of million wells for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes' farmers belonging to small and marginal category below the poverty line has been launched this year. All the States/UTs. of the Indian Union were initially chosen for implementation of the scheme and given targets for 1988-89. Some of them have, however, opted out due to non-availability of adequate ground water etc.

(b) and (c) The State of Kerala is an integral part of the scheme as a participant. There is therefore, no question of the State Government demanding their inclusion in this scheme.

Declaration of coconut as oilseed

1224. SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleaed to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the coconut has been declared as an oilseed in all the countries in the world except India;

(b) whether the Kerala State Government has been demanding for the declaration of coconut as an oilseed for the long time; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) Coconut is treated as an oil bearing palm in all countries where it is largely grown.

(b) and (c) Demands have been made from time to time to declare coconut as an oilseed. It is not considered necessary to declare coconut as oilseed because being a plantation crop distinct from annual crops of other oilseeds, coconut requires specialised handling for which Coconut Development Board has been set up. Besides, only a small part of this crop is being used as edible oil.

Problem of agricultural sector in Kerala

1225. SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kerala State Agriculture Minister met him recently to discuss about some of the vital and pressing problems of the State in the agricultural sector; and

(b) if so, the details of the subjects discussed therein and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) and (b) Agriculture Minister Kerala met Union Agriculture Minister recently and submitted a memorandum. The points raised in the memorandum are: withdrawal of open general licence system for import of copra, coconut oil, rubber/rubber products, clove, nutmeg etc., withdrawal of export cess imposed on pepper, inclusion of coconut under oilseed, inclusion of Kerala in the special foodgrain production programme and digging of wells for irrigation. It has not been possible to include coconut in oilseed development programmes. Kerala is not included in Special Foodgrains Production Programme. Action has been initiated on other points.